THE

SEASONS.

CONSIDERED

As representing the different Periods of Man's Life—as Evidences of the Power, Wisdom, and Goodness of GOD—and as Motives to incite to Piety and Devotion.

BY

JAMES MAXWELL,

POET IN PAISLEY.

PAISLEY:

Printed by John Neilson for the Author.

M.DCC.LXXXVII.

46
9.707.4

AUTUMN;

OR,

HARVEST.

PROPITIOUS Heav'n, who has indulg'd my Muſe,
Preſerv'd my life, and lengthen'd out my views,
To ſing the beauties of the verdant Spring,
When thou didſt all things into being bring.
Nor only Spring, in infancy yet green,
But Summer alſo, more maturely ſeen.
Thro' theſe two ſeaſons has the Muſe been brought,
By thine aſſiſtance, who enlarg'd my thought;
To thee I therefore dedicate my lays,
In which I aim to celebrate thy praiſe.
Aſſiſt me now a third attempt to try,
To ſing thy works in full maturity.
As Spring and Summer have by thee been bleſt,
Let now the Harveſt far exceed the reſt,
To ſhew the kindneſs of thy providence,
How thou to mankind doſt thy gifts diſpenſe.
Though all were forfeited, both great and ſmall,
Into thy hand, by our firſt father's fall:
Yet has thy tender mercy interpos'd,
So that we are not all to want expos'd.
This calls for thankfulneſs from all mankind,
Who are not ſtupid, wilful deaf and blind.
But worſe than mad, ſure muſt thoſe ingrates be,
Who are unthankful for ſuch mercies free.

When we behold the vallies deck'd with corn,
And verdant graſs the riſing hills adorn:
To ſee the fruits ſo plump and ripe appear,
And ſuch abundant goodneſs crown the year;
If all theſe things will not excite to praiſe,
Then ſure man's heart muſt needs be matchleſs baſe.

But, Man, conſider how theſe things will ſoon
Be all condemn'd to death, and ſoon cut down;
The life of theſe is almoſt at a cloſe,
And they muſt all their glowing beauties loſe.
They know not that their exit is ſo near,
While they in full maturity appear;
They muſt be all cut down and gather'd in,
Before a thought of death in them begin.

Hence, let us all conſider, who are ſpar'd
To this third ſtage of life, how we're prepar'd
To meet Death's ſummons, now approaching near,
When we muſt all before our Judge appear.
Though unprepar'd, death will make no delay,
No, not afford us one more ſingle day!
Nay, not an hour or minute will he ſtay!
If unprepar'd, 'tis high time to begin,
And to conſider of our hainous ſin;
Leſt Death ſhould overtake us unaware;
He'll leave us then no leiſure to prepare.
O dreadful caſe! if we ſo long have liv'd
Unthoughtful; and God's Spirit thus have griev'd,
With hearts impenitent, and unconcern'd,
And never have till this our duty learn'd.

Conſider too, what warnings we have had,
Yet ſtill ſecure: we ſurely have been mad!
Our Summer's ended; harveſt almoſt gone,
And we not ſav'd? ah, think what we have done!

Some have, perhaps, been heaping worldly ſtore,
Unſatisfied, and craving ſtill for more———
One ſays, If I had but a hundred pound,
O that would give a moſt delightful ſound!
That ſum obtain'd, ſays he, O let me ſtrive
To multiply this hundred pound by five.
Well, this obtain'd, thinks he, I'll ſtrive again,
If I can make my five amount to ten.
He gets his wiſh, yet avarice goes on,
Still more and more; nor would he e'er have done
If death did not his craving heart prevent:
The more he gets the leſs is he content.
Yet, all this while, he ſeldom thinks that death
Will ſoon deprive him of his mortal breath.
Yet in the midſt of wealth he ſtill is poor,
And doth a thouſand wants and woes endure.
But, ah, how is his ſordid mind oppreſt,
When death doth him in midſt of all arreſt!
"What! muſt I go, ſays he, and leave my ſtore,
My lands, my houſes, ne'er to ſee them more!
My ſpendthrift ſon, I fear, MY ALL will ſpend,
And all my wealth in poverty will end!
What ſhall I do? alas, I'm ſore diſtreſt!
Of death I never thought of in the leaſt!
I added houſe to houſe, and field to field,
And muſt I now to death my body yield!
What muſt I do?—will nothing death prevent?
And muſt I now from all my wealth be rent?
Muſt all I lov'd thus from mine eyes be torn?
Ah, this is harder than can e'er be borne."
Thus would he long reflect and vex, but here
Death ſtops his mouth amidſt his mad career.

He ſpeaks no more; but hear him pant and rave,
Ah, how unwilling thus his pelf to leave!
Now breath is gone! he nothing fear'd but death;
Nor once conſider'd, that he farther hath
Before his awful Judge now to appear,
And what a dreadful ſentence he muſt hear!

Thus lives the worldly man, and thus he dies,
Death ſeizes on him in a ſad ſurprize.
To be cut off from all his worldly gear,
Is all his grievance; yea, and all his fear.
This world's his god, and when he this muſt leave,
No wonder that his heart ſhould pine and grieve.
When he muſt die and leave his all behind,
It ſurely muſt torment and vex his mind.

Others, perhaps, in pleaſure take delight,
All day they hunt, and then carouſe at night,
Till age comes on; death ſtares them in the face,
And they no longer can purſue the chace:
Of death or judgment they before ne'er thought,
Till age and ſickneſs are upon them brought:
Then all they fear is, that the hand of death
Should rob them of their pleaſure and their breath.
No thought of future judgment is their fear,
Nor how they muſt before their Judge appear;
But chiefly, how death's hand will cut them ſhort
Of all their pleaſure, and deſtroy their ſport.
Thus men of carnal mirth, ſpend their beſt days
In vain delights, and in voluptuous plays.

Others, on honour all their minds are ſet;
Yea, worldly honour's all they aim to get.
To ride in triumph, and to get a name
Of greatneſs, and obtain a laſting fame.

Religion is to them so mean a thing
That down thereto their minds they ne'er can bring.
But if religion be for them too low,
A lower place they're likely soon to know.
Those who despise it with a scornful voice,
Them I must leave to their delib'rate choice:
But when the king of terrors once appears,
Perhaps he'll fill their minds with panic fears.
And lo, he comes with glass and scythe in hand!
Their mortal life he doth at once command.
He comes with pow'r; in vain they bid him stay;
The stoutest and the proudest must obey.
In vain, A little longer, they may cry,
Their earnest suits he wholly will deny.
No; not a day, an hour, a moment he
Will grant to those of high or low degree.
Though men put far from them the evil day,
Yet, when it comes, there's none can it gainsay.
Yea, it comes on, with horrors more extreme,
Than if it had been thought of more by them.
Now, harvest is a time when all are throng,
All that are able, whether old or young,
In cutting down, and gath'ring in the grain,
And many sweat, and work with toil and pain;
But few consider how indulgent Heav'n
Into our hands such bounteous gifts hath giv'n.
Which should induce us all to thankfulness
Our gracious Benefactor still to bless;
Yea, evermore ought we, with one accord,
To bless and praise the goodness of the Lord:
But man, ungrateful man, he seldom owns
The gift; but when withdrawn he frets and frowns.

O vile ingratitude! ah, who could bear
Such base returns from one another here?
And can we think the Lord will not resent
Such conduct, and such wretched discontent?
Although his patience may a while endure,
A heavy recompense must follow sure.
If he do not his corn and wine withdraw,
It ought to strike our minds with greater awe;
For it will sorer judgments on us bring,
Than if he caus'd no fruits for us to spring.
Ingratitude is sure the worst of crimes,
Which brings down wrath on sinners heads betimes:
Especially on those who always prove
Regardless of his anger or his love.
Now doth his bounty lib'rally appear;
He crowns with goodness each revolving year.
Had he with-held his blessing from our ground,
No food for men or beast had here been found.
But, O what cause have we to praise the Lord,
Who doth to us such plenty still afford!
Let us consider, how in days of old,
The Lord did from the earth his grace withhold
For seven long years, where plenty long had been,
No earing-time, nor harvest there was seen.
Now, had he thus our thankless country serv'd,
We might have said 'twas what we well deserv'd.
But sure if mercy will not melt our heart,
We may expect his wrath will make us smart.
If this will not provoke our fear and love,
We sure the most unworthy creatures prove.
His gifts from us he justly may withdraw,
When we so daringly transgress his law.

BRITAIN, remember Nineveh of old,
A heathen city, great and manifold,
When God to them a threat'ning meſſage ſent,
How did they of their hainous crimes repent!
God's threat'nings kindled in their breaſts remorſe,
And ev'ry one forſook his evil courſe;
Then did the Lord from them his wrath withdraw,
When he their works of deep repentance ſaw.
This was to ſhame the baſe rebellious Jews,
Whom he did long with tender mercies uſe;
And this ſhould ſure our Chriſtian breaſts inflame
With deep contrition, and with humble ſhame.
If threat'nings made theſe heathens thus repent,
When nought but threat'ning was againſt them ſent,
What cauſe have we to bluſh and be aſham'd,
That mercy hath no more our hearts inflam'd?
But threats and promiſes with us oft prove
In vain, to make us either fear or love.
O dreadful caſe! what cauſe have we to fear
The wrath of God will ſoon on us appear?
Lift up your eyes, ye aged men, and ſee
How white the fields, how ready now they be
For cutting down, and gath'ring to the barn——
Let this remind you of your great concern.
Are you now ready for the ſtroke of death,
That ſhortly will recal your aged breath?
You have had time allow'd you to prepare;
Conſider now, if unprepar'd you are,
How awful is your caſe? What have you done?
The ſand-glaſs of your life is almoſt run!
See, Death ſtands ready, glaſs and ſcythe in hand.
Behold, how little the remaining ſand!

Consider too, what warnings you have had,
And have you not been most prepost'rous mad?
How many young ones call'd by death have been?
How oft have you these awful warnings seen?
Yet unconcern'd; you little thought how Death
Would soon arrest you, and recal your breath.
Consider this, ye aged men, I pray;
Improve your short remains without delay.
Much of your precious time is run to waste,
For want of thought; for want of prudent taste.
Let this rouse sluggards from their beds of ease,
Lest death and dire destruction on them seize
Before they be aware; and ghastly Death
Deprive them of their short remains of breath.
If unexperienc'd youth are counted fools;
Because they have not learn'd the Sage's rules;
Sure aged men are greater fools than they,
Who never think upon their dying day.
And ev'n when nature fails and strength is gone,
For vigour lost they only pant and grone;
And though they feel their faculties abate,
They seldom think upon a future state.
O strange stupidity! without remorse,
Instead of mending, growing daily worse.
On the grave's brink, perhaps, as fond of sin
As e'er they were since life did first begin.
What shall be said to rouse you from your sloth?
To leave you in this danger I am loth;
I beg that Heav'n may open yet your eyes,
And shew you where your dreadful danger lies;
Nor only make you now your danger see,
But cause you to the remedy to flee.

A sov'reign remedy yet still remains,
The blood that issu'd from the Saviour's veins,
This fountain washes out the deepest stains.
If thus neglected to the very last,
Then all your hopes of happiness are past;
Nothing but horror and eternal pain,
Without remission, does for you remain.

But Satan now may tempt you to despair,
And say, 'tis now too late to think of pray'r;
He with your former sins may you upbraid,
And daily strive to make the breach more wide:
But yield not now to his deceitful lies,
For all his craft is only false disguise;
By him too long have you deceived been,
And made the willing slaves of sensual sin;
Now yield to his delusive lies no more,
But think how you have been deceiv'd before;
Now to the word of God alone give ear,
And you the voice of mercy yet shall hear.
There will you find the penitential thief,
Breathing his last, obtain'd a sweet relief.
This is a faithful saying, just and true,
To which is all acceptance justly due,
That Jesus Christ left his celestial throne,
To save the chief of sinners quite undone;
Think what he suffer'd, what he underwent,
Your final ruin kindly to prevent.
God lov'd the world to such a high degree,
He gave his only Son to set us free;
That whosoever should in him believe,
Should peace and pardon finally receive.
A plenteous harvest thus he gather'd in
Of guilty mortals, purified from sin;

And thus he render'd all without excuſe,
Who do theſe glorious tidings yet refuſe.
Let then each ſinner all his ſins forſake,
And to the Lord himſelf, by faith, betake:
For plenteous mercy is with Chriſt the Lord,
He pardon will and peace to you afford.
Yea, let the wicked now forſake his way,
And turn unto the Lord without delay,
So ſhall he be from ſin and guilt ſet free,
And God's ſalvation he with joy ſhall ſee.
O then the grace of God at laſt receive;
Your pardon's ſeal'd, if ye in truth believe.
And now to all I would the word addreſs,
To ſtir you up to chearful thankfulneſs.
Since God the year with bleſſings now hath crown'd,
How ſhould our hearts with love to him abound!
While we his gifts ſo plenteouſly enjoy,
Let thanks and praiſe our hearts and tongues employ.
This is incumbent both on old and young;
Let then his praiſe by ev'ry one be ſung.
If any dare ſuch kind advice diſdain,
'Twill prove Heav'n's gifts to them are all in vain.
The very brutes with joy receive their food,
And to their donors ſhew their gratitude:
But man, ungrateful man, to whom kind Heav'n
The very choiceſt of his gifts hath giv'n,
Is ſtill unthankful for thoſe gifts receiv'd,
And frets and murmurs when of them bereav'd,
As if they did of right to him belong,
And when withheld, as if he ſuffer'd wrong.
O baſe ingratitude! can any ſay
But what he lent he only takes away?

Or that he but withholds his corn and wine
At his own will, by sov'reign right divine?
Some think, when Heav'n good things on them bestows,
All from their skill or their industry flows;
Or if they own 'twas God these things bestow'd,
'Twas but a debt to them he justly ow'd;
Meaning, their goodness merited the same.
Thus do they their own righteousness proclaim.
But, O vain foolish man, consider well,
If this be not the policy of hell?
What canst thou merit at thy Maker's hands,
When thou hast broken all his just commands?
Thy merit can be nought but dreadful wrath,
And everlasting mis'ry after death,
Unless thou dost on Jesus Christ depend,
And dost by faith obtain him for thy friend.
None other name, in either earth or heav'n,
Was ever for a soul's salvation giv'n.
O then be wise, and build upon that Rock,
Which neither pow'rs of earth or hell can shock.
Other foundation there are none can lay,
But what are weak as stubble, straw or hay:
But this is permanent, for ever sure,
And will to all eternity endure.
Now tares are often found among the wheat,
So hypocrites among the saints will meet,
Until the harvest; ev'n till Christ shall come,
To judge the world and pass the final doom.
The reapers then (his angels) he will send,
To gather out what doth his eye offend.
The wheat (his saints) shall then be gather'd in
To endless bliss, all purified from

In glorious triumph they with him ſhall riſe
To manſions fair, prepar'd above the ſkies.
A glorious harveſt this will be to thoſe,
Who do with Chriſt and his ſalvation cloſe;
Beyond expreſſion ſhall their pleaſure be,
From ſin and ſorrow totally ſet free;
Their bliſs complete, eternally ſhall laſt,
When ſin and ſorrows are for ever paſt.
O who would not for ſuch a glorious prize
A gaudy world of vanities deſpiſe!
Short are the pleaſures that are found herein;
How falſe th' allurements of bewitching ſin!
Let this excite us all to ſhun the path
That leads to miſ'ry and eternal wrath.
No ſolid pleaſure e'er is found in ſin,
For with our joys our ſorrows quick begin.
But wiſdom's ways are ways of pleaſantneſs,
In all her paths our peaceful joys increaſe.
But ways of folly are the ways of grief;
Forlorn her paths, without the leaſt relief.
The wheat (the ſaints) thus gather'd ſhall be ſtor'd
In heav'nly manſions, by their ſov'reign Lord.
The fruit of all his travail, all his pain,
As huſbandmen lay up the precious grain:
But lo, the tares (the hypocrites) now ſee,
With everlaſting fire conſum'd ſhall be.
The day of ſeparation then will come,
When ev'ry one ſhall hear their righteous doom.
O man, conſider of thy preſent ſtate,
And think upon thy danger ere too late.
The time is coming ſoon, when thou muſt go
To hear thy final ſentence, weal or woe.

A joyful day it will be then for ſome,
To hear their welcome, "Come, ye bleſſed, come!"
To others it will be a day of grief,
To hear the word, Depart, without relief.
O then to hear your ſentence now prepare!
Make this your only buſineſs and your care.
See how the leaves are falling from the trees,
Some with a ſtorm, ſome with a gentle breeze.
So men are falling daily to the grave,
And from the ſtroke of death there's none can ſave.
For it appointed is that all muſt die,
The rich, the poor, the lowly and the high:
And after death the judgment muſt ſucceed,
As by the will of Heav'n it is decreed.
Remember this, ye aged ſinners all,
And on the Lord for mercy quickly call.
You ſee how many are before you gone,
Therefore your time muſt ſoon be coming on.
And can you be ſecure and unconcern'd,
When you have been hereof ſo kindly warn'd?
Your very laſt ſtake you are ſoon to throw,
Either for weal, or everlaſting woe.
But this I intimated heretofore,
And therefore ſhould hereon ſay little more;
Only I'm loth to leave you unconcern'd,
Although you have ſo frequently been warn'd.
I alſo am advanc'd in years, like you,
And ſoon muſt bid the tranſient world adieu.
Of harveſts I have ſeen full ſixty-five,
And 'tis of mercy that I yet ſurvive.
A friendly warning let us therefore take,
And the beſt uſe of our ſhort time now make.

Too much our time hath been in folly ſpent,
And time is yet allow'd us to repent.
All thanks to Heav'n we have ſo long been ſpar'd;
But, ah, how ill are we for death prepar'd!
'Tis therefore now no time for more delay
Since we have waſted ſo much time away:
And now the thread of life ſeems almoſt ſpun,
O let us then conſider what we've done!
If we have hitherto neglectful been,
'Tis high time now in earneſt to begin
To try ourſelves; examine hopes and fears;
And how the ſtate of our affairs appears.
If ſin be conquer'd, and the love of God
Within our hearts be truly ſhed abroad,
We may have hope; but if the love of ſin
Be ſtill, ſtill lurking all our hearts within,
We have juſt cauſe the very worſt to fear,
How we ſhall in the ſight of God appear.
Sin is obnoxious to his holineſs,
And if we do the ſame with love careſs,
He will not hear us when to him we pray,
But from us turn his gracious ear away.
Sometimes a ſin leaves men ere they leave it,
When, by their age, they render'd are unfit;
Although they love it dearly in their heart,
They are unable to perform their part.
But thus in vain we hope the Lord to pleaſe,
Who all our thoughts as well as actions ſees.
How ſhall we then before his face appear,
If from the love of ſin we get not clear?
But this I know is not in us to do,
No more than 'tis to form ourſelves anew.

Then let us humbly bow before the Lord,
And beg he would his saving strength afford,
To change, renew, and mould our souls afresh,
And turn our carnal, stony hearts to flesh.
This hath he promis'd, let us plead the same,
With all humility, in Jesus' name.
'Tis also promis'd, He that seeks shall find,
Then let us plead his promises so kind,
Faithful is he who promis'd, for he will
To true believers amply them fulfil.
Whate'er we ask aright, we shall receive,
If we with stedfast hearts on him believe.
But oftentimes we ask for that or this,
And nought receive, because we ask amiss.
But let us ask in faith, and nothing doubt,
For unbelief shuts all our mercies out:
But if we seek and stedfastly believe,
We shall the same or better things receive.
A double-minded man himself deceives,
And is unstable as the boist'rous waves.
Let this excite us all to stedfastness,
And not the laws of gospel truth transgress;
Humbling ourselves for each obnoxious crime,
That God may us exalt in his good time.
But haughty sinners, they must die accurst,
Doom'd like the fallen angels at the first:
For haughty pride was sure their first offence,
At which did their eternal fall commence.
Thus pride still brings the haughty sinner low,
And makes him his deserved place to know,
Not only know, but feel eternally
The direful issue of his destiny.

Let us conſider this with one accord,
And humbly bow ourſelves before the Lord.
Humility will raiſe our ſouls on high;
But pride will us debaſe eternally.
Let us conſider too our former years,
How we have run ſo deep in Heav'n's arrears;
For this ſhould lay us low, ev'n in the duſt,
Yet not the mercy of the Lord diſtruſt.
Although we have the chief of ſinners been,
If we are willing to forſake our ſin,
The Lord is ready to forgive us all,
If we by faith for mercy humbly call.
O what encouragement doth this afford,
To thoſe who humbly turn unto the Lord!
But thoſe who ſtill preſumptuouſly rebel,
Muſt find their place where Satan's legions fell.
Preſumption makes men fearleſsly offend,
Then dire deſpair commences in the end;
Which ſinks them in the gulf of endleſs grief,
From whence they never can obtain relief.
But holy, humble, godly fear obtains
The crown of life th' ambitious ſoul diſdains.
Such was the caſe of Satan and his crew,
Which on themſelves eternal vengeance drew:
Becauſe ambition did their ſpirits fire;
Above the Lord they plotted to aſpire;
At leaſt to be from under his command,
Then drew they up in a rebellious band,
To fight againſt the ſov'reign pow'r of Heav'n,
From whence they ſoon were in confuſion driv'n,
And bound in chains of darkneſs: thus were they
Reſerv'd unto the gen'ral judgment day;

Thence to be doom'd to everlaſting fire,
Where they may gnaw their chains, but ne'er expire.
And when they found for them was no releaſe,
They ſtrove to ruin all our human race;
In tempting our firſt parents, by deceit,
Till they did of the tree forbidden eat.
Then had not Heav'n in mercy interpos'd,
We in his fatal net had been inclos'd;
Nor had been ſaved one of Adam's race,
Had not the Son of God aſſum'd our place.
The juſt for the unjuſt he deign'd to die,
That we, eſtrang'd, might be to God brought nigh;
Yea, he for all full ſatisfaction paid,
Who do by faith truſt in his ſov'reign aid,
And are made willing to forſake their ſin,
Although they have unworthy rebels been.
O joyful news! let us hereto attend,
That we at laſt may find a happy end.

A HYMN ON AUTUMN.

1 THE Spring is paſt, the Summer's gone,
And Harveſt now appears:
'Tis time we then ſhould think upon
Our ſwift declining years.

2 Our land the Lord hath fill'd with food,
Our Winter to ſupply;
His tender mercies are renew'd
To us abundantly.

3 Now let us think what thanks are due
To his moſt holy name:
Such favours ſhould our hearts ſubdue,
And raiſe Love's ſacred flame.

4 Since we have ſeen another year
With his rich goodneſs crown'd,
Let now our love to him appear,
And thankfulneſs abound.

5 Who knows but this may be the laſt;
We here on earth may ſee?
O let us think on thoſe we've paſt
In ſinful vanity!

6 Yet mercy hath prolong'd our days,
And lengthen'd out our ſpan,
Though we have them in ſinful ways
Spent ſince our lives began.

7 And are we yet in life preſerv'd?
O wondrous tale to tell!
Since we ſo juſtly have deſerv'd,
The ſecond death in hell,

8 O let us then conſider well
What danger we are in;
If we continue to rebel,
And yield us ſlaves of ſin.

9 May it not then be ſaid of us,
As it was ſaid of old,
Concerning Iſra'l, who did thus
In ſin continue bold?

10 "The ſummer's gone! the harveſt's paſt!
"Alas! and we're not ſav'd!
"In captive chains we're holden faſt,
"To Satan's will enſlav'd!"

11 O let us hence a warning take,
What danger we are in,
Till we the ſlavery forſake
Of Satan and of ſin.

12 Still hope there is, while life remains,
God's mercies we may prove:
O let us therefore ſpare no pains
To gain our Saviour's love!

THE END OF AUTUMN.